

Minutes – Meeting of the Arlington Human Rights Commission
Wednesday, April 19, 2017
Jefferson Cutter House
8:00 p.m.

Present: Christine Carney & Mel Goldsipe (Co-Chairs), Ghanda DiFiglia, Chris Huvos, Sharon Grossman, Gary Horowitz, Marlissa Briggett, Wendy Bell, Kristina Fontanez, David Swanson

Absent: Sheri Baron, Bill Logan, Nick Minton

Guest: Brackett Principal Stephanie Zerchykov

Citizens Open Forum

Principal Zerchykov came in to discuss the recent incident at the Brackett School where a swastika was found. She notified families about the incident and used the open circle model to talk about this in the classrooms.

Commissioner Carney discussed the AHRC efforts to establish a school protocol for hate incidents (area sealed off, police called, documentation, then removal). It appears an official protocol has not been established. But Commissioners applauded Principal ___ for reacting well and quickly, particularly by sending out the email.

Principal Zerchykov wants education for her teachers on how to deal with instances like this. There is a social worker available to the students. Commissioner Grossman indicated it would be good for the social worker to tell teachers what to look for to find children who are scared or anxious. Commissioner Huvos indicated that perhaps children would feel more comfortable going to the social worker in groups.

Commissioner Fontanez asked if a police report had been filed. Principal Zerchykov wasn't sure. The co-chairs have not received a police report.

Commissioner Fontanez suggested True Story Theater may. Commissioner Huvos will check in with them. Principal Zerchykov will also talk to the ADL.

Principal Zerchykov indicated that the elementary principals get together once a month but that hate incidents have not been a topic. But she will bring it up at the next one. Commissioner Goldsipe suggested she share her email as a template for the other principals.

Minutes

Commissioner Huvos moved to accept the minutes as amended, Commissioner Goldsipe seconded. All voted in favor, except Commissioner Briggett who abstained.

Correspondence

A community member asked that we have a rally given the uptick in incidents.

The flying of the confederate flag in East Arlington continues to be a topic of concern among residents.

At Locke Park, there was a “Heil Hitler” message written on the hopscotch.

We received a Facebook message from a community member asking if there was something we could do about someone who is bullying others on an Arlington online forum.

Incidents

1. Safe Space stickers have been removed at the High School.
2. We received police reports about the Ottoson graffiti and at the high school. Commissioner Carney called the principal, Commissioners Goldsipe and Grossman emailed him. Commissioner Goldsipe sent an email and cc'd Jennifer Susse and Superintendent Bodie.

Commissioner Grossman talked to him today and found that they're actually doing a lot of good things but they're not letting people know. She told the principal we need to know when things are happening in the high school so that we can respond and put it in the context of the town-wide incidents. They are bringing everyone together to have conversations about what they can do as a school. The theater Director wrote an AEF grant, A Unity Event. Performance art. She told him to let us know if a community conversation would be helpful, if we could help with programs.

3. Locke School playground swastika (also noted above)
4. Donald Trump was drawn with a black mustache and a swastika on someone's car windshield. Resident didn't know why but called the police to report it so Commissioner Carney called to follow up.
5. Confederate flag flown in a home owned by the Arlington Housing Corp. Commissioner Carney asked if there were any by-laws that would address the issue. They do receive CDBG funds. We got signs to offer others in the neighborhood. Put it in the by-laws.

Commissioner Carney had signs made: Hate Has No Home Here. We will offer them to the neighbors. Discussion ensued about how to facilitate distribution of signs.

Commissioner Grossman moves that we allocate up to \$700 to print more signs from Hate Has No Home Here. Commissioner Goldsipe seconded. Discussion ensued. All voted in favor.

Commissioner Swanson asked if we could put #arlforall on the signs. Commissioner Carney said it wasn't possible to customize them. But Commissioner Goldsipe suggested we add stickers.

There was discussion about whether the flag is hate speech and whether the anti-discrimination policies of the town can be applied here. Commissioner Swanson will talk to Town Counsel about it.

Patriots' Day Parade

Our group will meet at 1:20 at the Dunkin Donuts parking lot in the Heights. Commissioners Grossman, Briggett, Carney, Huvos and Fontanez will participate.

Town Meeting

A community member asked that we write a commentary for the paper about the Trust Act. Commissioner Swanson agreed to take this on with Commissioner Goldsipe. Commissioners Grossman and Carney will assist. Also, we need an updated Fact Sheet.

We were asked to sign on to a warrant article about banning plastic bags. After discussion, commissioners decided this was outside the purview of the AHRC.

We were asked to talk about the Trust Act at the Precinct 1 meeting but it conflicts with the parade.

Subcommittee reports

Commissioner Huvos reported that the Cultural Competency Training may be changed by the superintendent to call it social/emotional training. Miriam Stein is concerned that it's being watered down.

Commissioner Goldsipe moved that we table discussion of the Municipal Equality Index.

Commissioner Grossman moved to table the Schools Report and to table agenda items 8 (True Story Theater collaboration) and 9 (Recap of justice reform event March 25). All agreed.

Community Events & Info

The Commission has been asked to cosponsor an event with the Arlington-Teosinte City Project. We ran out of time to discuss but the co-chairs have authority to approve or reject cosponsorship of events that don't require AHRC work or money.

Commissioner Horowitz moved to adjourn. Commissioner Goldsipe seconded. All voted in favor.

Submitted by Marlissa Briggett, Commissioner